New-York Tribune.

Vol. XXXVI....No. 10,935. NEW-YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 17, 1876. PRICE FOUR CENTS.

WASHINGTON.

GEN. BABCOCK'S INDICTMENT.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO PUNISH THE SAFE BURGLARY CONSPIRATORS—BABCOCK, HARRINGTON, NETTLESHIP, AND FOUR OTHERS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION—GOV. SHEPHERD AT HAND WITH BAIL SECURITY.

[FROM A REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—Secretary Chandler, ex-Secretary Borie, Collector Arthur, District-Attorney Bliss, Police Commissioner Wheeler, and other liberal lovers of the Administration, who are feeding or have fed at the National crib through the favor of Gen. Grant, will soon have another opportunity to unite in making a purse of $30,000, more or less, to defray the legal expenses of Gen. Babcock in defending himself for wrong-doing against the laws of his country. False certificates of measurements, complicity in the Whisky Ring, and other crimes charged against the President's late private secretary, have been set aside in one way or another, but they have nevertheless left a deep impression on the minds of the people, which no jury decision may deface.

A severer test of Gen. Babcock's innocence must soon be made. If he escapes this, it will be said he bears a charm, proof against evidence, which protects him from punishment. In the terrible mystery which has enveloped the District safe burglary—the most infamous conspiracy known in the criminal annals of the country—there have always been two or three men whose presence was felt, but whose names and identity were beyond proof. In all the developments, these men were never uncovered, and yet there was a general feeling of suspicion resting upon at least two men who bore the closest relations with the Executive. The Grand Jury of the District of Columbia to-day indicted one of these men, and the other was present to go on his bail.

Gen. Babcock, indicted to-day—as it was announced in THE TRIBUNE yesterday that he would probably be—with half a dozen others whose names follow, will have another chance to show his innocence of a crime deeper and more terrible than stealing from the Government. When his name was mentioned by Whitley, ex-Chief of the Secret Service Division, he grew red in the face with anger, and all his friends followed his example, and declared Whitley a disreputable fellow, and said Babcock was innocent, and no detective could be believed. So Whitley's testimony before the Judiciary Committee was set aside with a sneer, and Babcock and his friends again wooed themselves into tranquillity. All at once Whitley was summoned before the Grand Jury: he gave his testimony; it was verified by unimpeachable evidence, and to-day Gen. Babcock was indicted on the charge of having on the 17th of April, 1874, conspired with others "to injure and oppress Columbus Alexander, and that in pursuance of said conspiracy they did procure certain persons named, to break and enter the office of the Attorney of the United States for the District of Columbia, and to take therefrom two books of John O Evans, and to carry them to the residence of the said Columbus Alexander."

The persons indicted at the same time with Gen. Babcock are as follows: Richard Harrington, late Assistant District-Attorney; H. C. Whitley, late Chief of Secret Service; J. C. Nettleship, a late Government detective; Thos. P. Somerville, a disreputable New-York lawyer; George E. Miles, a professional cracksman, and William Benton, a housebreaker and thief. The witnesses upon which the indictments were found are: A. B. Newcomb, Chief of Police Richards, Albert Cunz, O. D. Madge, Joshua Parker, E. C. Banfield, Michael Hays, H. C. Whitley, and Columbus Alexander. Newcomb and Banfield, the latter the ex-Solicitor of the Treasury, strongly supported and verified the testimony of Whitley before the Judiciary Committee, the substance of which has been printed already in THE TRIBUNE.

The Grand Jury were unable to discover the identity of the mysterious man whose acts were seen everywhere, and many of the jurymen believe that Whitley has not told all he knows. He was granted immunity by the Attorney-General, but he has nevertheless been again indicted, with the purpose of holding him until he tells all he knows. Gen. Babcock was present in court when the indictments were declared, and at once gave bail for $10,000, ex-Gov. Shepherd becoming his security.

THE PRESIDENT LOSES FAITH—HE ASKS THE DISCHARGE OF TWELVE CLERKS APPOINTED AT BABCOCK'S REQUEST.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—The President is understood to have lost faith in Gen. Babcock finally, and, in the polished language of Administrative circles, to have "thrown him overboard." One of the first results of this change of opinion is said to be a request by Gen. Grant to Secretary Bristow that he discharge twelve clerks in the Treasury Department appointed at the request of Gen. Babcock. These clerks are all said to be honest, competent men, and very useful in the positions they hold.

HARRINGTON NOT YET FOUND—NO EVIDENCE AGAINST EX-GOV. SHEPHERD—THE CASE CANNOT BE REACHED BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF JUNE.

[GENERAL PRESS DISPATCH.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—No new arrests have been made in the safe burglary cases, but no trouble is anticipated in obtaining the presence here of Whitley, Nettleship, Hayes, and Cunz, whenever they are wanted. Whitley's pardon depends upon his testimony in the case, and upon his testimony depends the entire case against Gen. Babcock. Harrington's whereabouts are unknown at the present. There are rumors that he is purposely evading arrest. The evidence of his guilt is said to be very positive and conclusive.

Rumors have prevailed and statements have been made that the Grand Jury have evidence before them implicating ex-Gov. Shepherd, Thomas Shepherd, Dr. Sharp, and others, but it can be authoritatively stated that there is not a particle of evidence in the District-Attorney's office, or in the hands of the Grand Jury, implicating any other person whomsoever besides those already indicted. Some suspicion has been directed toward Chief-Detective Clarvoe, but there is no evidence against him in the safe burglary case.

It is not believed that Marshal Sharpe was in any way guilty of packing the jury, as has been charged. He may, however, have unwittingly used a list of names for talesmen put into his hands by Harrington or some of his friends, and while this will be the subject of investigation it is not believed by the District-Attorney that any guilt will attach to him. District-Attorney Wells has been very vigilant in the safe burglary case and will bring it to trial at the earliest practicable moment, but does not expect it will be reached before the middle of June.

A STATEMENT THAT THE JURY OF 1874 WAS PACKED—MARSHAL SHARPE'S CONDUCT TO BE INVESTIGATED.

[GENERAL PRESS DISPATCH.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—It is stated that at the time of the safe burglary trial the regular panel of jurors was exhausted at the drawing, after obtaining only five jurors, and 25 talesmen were then ordered to be summoned by the Court. Immediately after the order was issued, Marshal Sharpe retired to his room with the deputy marshal, and presented a list of names already made up, from which the deputy marshal, after examination, suggested that two names should be erased, which was done. Twenty-five names were then counted off, beginning at the head of the list, and the persons were summoned from whom the other seven jurors were obtained.

The only question which can arise on this point is: Was the list of talesmen furnished to Marshal Sharpe by an outside party, and, if so, by whom? When the verdict was rendered it was ascertained that the jury stood four for conviction and eight for acquittal. Two of the talesmen voted for conviction and three for acquittal. Two of the jurors who voted for acquittal obtained positions under the District Government very soon after the trial. It is understood that these points will be matters of investigation.

THE DISTRICT CONTRACT SYSTEM.

THE RING'S METHOD PERPETUATED—COMPETITION FOR CONTRACTS NOT INVITED—GREATER EXPENSE OF THE SYSTEM.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—In a report recently made to the Commissioners of the District, Lieut. Hoxie, the engineer in charge of street improvements in Washington, defends the method of establishing rates for contract work instead of throwing it open to competition, as has generally been done in other cities. He says:

The advantage of this establishment of Board rates for the contract work is, that it enables the assignment of work to capable and responsible men, who have a good record of work already well performed. The method, in fact, dispenses with most of the objections to the contract system.

This language is almost identical with that used by the old Board of Public Works Ring in defending the same system. In the report of the Board for 1872 the Board said:

In the outset it was determined that it would be better for all parties concerned to establish a scale of prices at which work should be done, and to award contracts at these uniform prices to responsible persons, who, being paid only for work actually done, would have no interest in defrauding their employers. The result of this plan, as carried into practical operation, has been entirely satisfactory. By general advertising bids were received for all classes and descriptions of improvements, the prices fixed were based upon the information thus derived and the rates paid in other cities, and the work was awarded at those rates. The character of the work performed has demonstrated conclusively that this is the most economical and efficient means of prosecuting such undertakings, as it prevents straw bids and contracts to irresponsible parties, who would otherwise harass and retard the Board in their operations, either by selling out or by preferring extra or imaginary claims, to secure more than a fair equivalent for the services rendered.

If this theory had not been fully exploded, Lieut. Hoxie would be excusable for having adopted the plan he chose. But the method of awarding contracts was a subject to which the Special Investigating Committee of 1874 gave especial attention; numerous witnesses were examined upon it, and, after having heard both sides, the Committee published its conclusions in the report which it made to Congress. The following extract from the report will show what those conclusions were:

Taking into consideration the expense involved in the comprehensive plan before referred to, and enlarged as stated, your Committee are of opinion that the Board adopted an erroneous, and, in its results, a vicious method of letting contracts for this work, viz., without competition open to the public; and that the method adopted by the Board resulted in the payment of an increased price over and above what would have been paid if open, fair, and free competition had been invited.

The experience of the District under the *ad interim* government of the Commissioners has been the same as under the old Board of Public Works. Then contracts for the most remunerative work were awarded to men who were the favorites of the Ring, and who not only did it in a shabby manner, but have universally failed to keep it in repair as they were required to do by their contract, while they have successively pressed upon the Board of Audit many unjust claims for extra work, damages, &c. The same men have been doing the work under the present engineer.

The following extract from the letter of Lieut. Hoxie, already quoted, will illustrate some of the defects of this system. In speaking of the cost of building main sewers, the engineer says:

In the manuscript of my report of Nov. 30, 1875, was given the following summary of main sewer rates, which should have appeared on page 373 of the printed report of the Commissioners of Dec. 1, 1875, but which has, through some inadvertence, been omitted:

MAIN SEWER RATES.

The cost of the work as obtained by a detailed estimate of its excavation and masonry, viz:

Rates for bricks, per M	$23 00
Rates for stone, per perch	6 50
Rates for excavation for 16 feet deep and less, per cubic yard	40
And for all over 16 feet deep, per cubic yard	77
Rates for shoring, per lineal foot	1 08

Second: An addition of 15 per centum for contingencies.

Third: A further addition of 15 feet per centum on account of the manner of payment.

These rates are the same as those paid by the late Board of Public Works, and to them more than 32 per cent is added for contingencies and method of payment. For instance, the item for excavation deeper than 16 feet, 77 cents per cubic yard, was computed by finding the cost of the work at a fair price, and then adding 15 per cent for contingencies and 15 per cent for the depreciation of sewer bonds in which payment was made. The depreciation of the 3.65 bonds which the contractors have received during the past year, has never been greater than that of the sewer bonds was in 1873 and 1874, so that, while labor has been cheaper, Lieut. Hoxie has actually been paying over 32 per cent more than the late Board of Public Works did for the same work. And this has been done under the system that was deliberately condemned by Congress nearly two years ago.

KILBOURN'S HABEAS CORPUS.

A QUESTION OF JURISDICTION—DOUBT OF THE HOUSE AGREEING TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT—IN CASE OF AGREEMENT AN UNPLEASANTNESS LIKELY TO COME TO THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS—HISTORY OF THE CASE.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—No more important question has ever been raised in the House of Representatives than that brought in yesterday by the Committee on the Judiciary with the resolution directing the Sergeant-at-Arms not to produce the body of Hallett Kilbourn in the United States Circuit Court for this District, in obedience to the writ of habeas corpus. For the first time, probably, in the history of this country a conflict of jurisdiction seems likely to arise between the Judiciary and one branch of Congress, and on a proper solution of this controversy may depend very important consequences.

The case, as it now presents itself, is this: Hallett Kilbourn, while being examined before the Committee of the House, refused to answer certain questions propounded to him by the Committee, and to produce certain papers called for. Thereupon the House ordered its Sergeant-at-Arms to take him into custody, and to keep him in confinement in the common jail of the District until it gives further orders. Subsequently the Speaker certified to the District-Attorney that Kilbourn had violated a statute of the United States by refusing to answer questions asked him by authority of the House, and he was indicted by the Grand Jury, and finally the Judge of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District has issued a writ of habeas corpus, directing the Sergeant-at-Arms to surrender the body of Kilbourn to the custody of the Court, in order that the cause of his imprisonment and the authority under which it is imposed may be properly investigated.

This writ the Committee would, by its report, instruct the Sergeant-at-Arms to disobey, so far as the production and surrender of the body of the prisoner is concerned; and, from the drift of discussion yesterday, the House seemed disposed to sustain the Committee's report, although many Democrats think to-day that it will be defeated. But the very essence of this writ is the possession of the body of the prisoner by the tribunal from which it issues, and, according to repeated decisions of courts, the investigation which it contemplates cannot proceed without it. The theory on which such an investigation proceeds is that the prisoner and his custodian shall be placed on an equal footing before the court, and in order to insure this the former must not only be present, but must be taken out of the power of the latter. A writ of habeas without the corpus would be a contradiction in terms, and the body cannot be in the custody of the court so long as it is kept in durance by any other authority.

In the Irwin case, a year ago, this same question arose, and the Court when the Sergeant-at-Arms appeared without his prisoner absolutely refused to proceed a single step or to hear an argument in his absence. When Irwin was taken into court the Judge decided without hesitation that he was held by competent authority and remanded him to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

It should be remembered that the question now raised is not whether Kilbourn is properly imprisoned or not, though that will be involved if the Court gets possession of his body, but whether a judicial inquiry can be made into the circumstances of his imprisonment, and the authority by which he is detained. If the House directs its officer not to surrender Kilbourn on Tuesday next, and he appears in court without his prisoner, a motion will probably be made for the issue of an attachment against the Sergeant-at-Arms for contempt of court, and on that motion Judge Cartter will hear an argument from his decision. On this motion an appeal will go to the Supreme Court, and in this way this important question can be finally determined. Whatever he may judge to be his duty in this case Judge Cartter will discharge it fearlessly, vindicating the law as he interprets it. The public interest in this case does not arise from any sympathy for Kilbourn, because many of those who are in favor of surrendering him in obedience to the writ believe that he ought to be made to answer the questions put to him.

SALARY OF THE PRESIDENT.

PROBABLE VETO OF THE BILL REDUCING IT TO $25,000—CONGRESS STILL ABLE TO MAKE THE REDUCTION IN THE APPROPRIATION BILL—GEN. GRANT IN A DILEMMA.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 16.—*The Washington Chronicle* to-day intimates that Gen. Grant will veto the bill reducing the salary of the President after the 4th of March, 1877, to $25,000. This measure met with very little opposition in either House, and no doubt expresses the honest conviction of a large majority of Senators and Representatives that if retrenchment is to be made in all other departments of the Government the chief Executive should not be made an exception.

But the President's veto of this bill would by no means prevent a reduction from being made. The same thing is accomplished in the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation bill now in the Committee of the Whole in the House, and, whatever the policy of the Senate may be in regard to the other reductions proposed by the same bill, it cannot, after its vote on the question when presented to it by itself, refuse to agree to this.

The same question is therefore very likely to be presented to the President in such a form that he will have to choose between approving of the reduction or vetoing an appropriation bill. It is hardly possible that he would do the latter. *The Chronicle*, which, in this case, is likely to speak with inspiration, says editorially:

The passage of this bill was, to speak correctly, simply a piece of demagogism. The Democratic House passed it for the purpose of making political capital. The Republican Senate concurred, lest their Democratic opponents should obtain advantage from their refusal. But, if hearts could be examined, it would be found, we doubt not, that there are no more than half a dozen intelligent members in either House who do not believe that the salary of $50,000 is little enough for the President of the United States. The people of the United States are not such paupers as to refuse to the Chief Magistrate a salary no larger than those of many of the officers of our joint stock companies, or the income of hundreds of our merchants. He should have such pay as will enable him to live in a manner becoming his dignity, and $50,000 is not too much. President Grant, in refusing to veto the bill increasing the salary of the President, expressed his ideas in regard to the matter. He will no doubt now show that his ideas have undergone no change by vetoing the repeal of the measure.

CASE OF JOURNAL CLERK SMITH.

THE HONESTY AND INTEGRITY OF THE RECORDS IMPERILED BY HIS ACTION—DEBATE IN THE HOUSE ENDS IN REFERRING THE SUBJECT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES.

WASHINGTON, April 16.—The House held a session yesterday, and nearly all its time was occupied with the case of Charles H. Smith, its Journal Clerk, and the Kilbourn habeas corpus question. Mr. White from Kentucky offered a resolution instructing the Judiciary Committee to inquire when there had been any violation of law in the clerk's case, whereupon Mr. Smith handed an explanatory letter to the Speaker, in which he said that while at home in New-Hampshire, at the recent election, he saw in the telegraphed dispatches that the additional bounty bill was before the House, and that he then made up his mind, if the bill should pass, to resign his official position and follow his profession as an attorney, and in that view he had prepared and issued the circular, a copy of which has been published in THE TRIBUNE. Mr. Hoar said that the law on the subject of Government employés acting as claim agents or attorneys was not the real question in the case. Mr. Smith journalized and recorded the action of the House, and he was to have a personal interest in the form and shape of the record which he made up, an interest acquired by him at his solicitation while the bill was pending. It was a question of the privileges and prerogatives of the House, and of the method which it should take to secure the honesty and integrity of its journal. He thought that the matter should be referred to the Committee on Rules, and, as Mr. Morrison modified his resolution accordingly, the question was referred to the Committee on Rules.

WASHINGTON NOTES.

WASHINGTON, April 16, 1876.

Regulations will be prepared at the Treasury Department to-morrow for the issue of silver currency. Treasurer New and Secretary Bristow were in consultation upon the subject yesterday. The silver will be issued only in substitution for fractional currency delivered at the Department. It has not yet been determined whether the Department will bear the expense of the transportation of the silver to the bankers and other parties applying therefor. There are $20,000,000 of silver and silver bullion now in the vaults of the Treasury and Sub-Treasury that can be drawn upon, and enough will be provided to redeem all the fractional currency in circulation as rapidly as the same may be presented.

It is expected that the U. S. Supreme Court will to-morrow render its decision in what are known as the "Illinois Railroad cases," which involve several highly important questions concerning taxation.

An effort will be made to-morrow to fix a day for another trial of Mr. Ottman, who is charged with embezzlement in receiving the $47,000, knowing it was stolen from the Treasury.

SOLUTION OF A FAMOUS ST. LOUIS PROBLEM.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

ST. LOUIS, April 10.—The meetings of the 13 "Freeholders" to prepare a new charter for St. Louis are now held daily, with fair prospect of satisfactory results. It is probably the best opportunity ever offered to any municipality to adjust a charter to its own uses and demands, and a majority of the 13 being men of good character and standing, our citizens are quite hopeful. In one respect the new charter will necessarily disappoint some of those who are its makers. They have been confidently expecting to introduce the Social Evil Regulation laws in such a way that the community would be compelled to accept them or reject the whole charter. To their chagrin they find that the new Constitution of the State distinctly and repeatedly restricts such charter from doing anything contrary to the laws of the State, by which prostitution is made a crime and absolutely prohibited. Further, the same Constitution prohibits the State Legislature from all special legislation for localities, and a license law would apply to the whole State, if at all. This puts social evil license at rest.

A CELEBRATION OF THE GREENFIELD CHURCH.

GREENFIELD HILL, Conn., April 15.—The 150th anniversary of the organizing and founding of Greenfield Church will be held on May 18 next. Services will be held in the church, beginning at 10 a. m., the Hon. Abram Wakeman acting as presiding officer. An address of welcome will be delivered by D. B. Hill; an address in reply by the Rev. George W. Brooks of Guilford, Conn., and an historical address by the Rev. H. B. Smith, pastor of the church. An address on the life, character, and times of the Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, fourth pastor of the church, will be delivered by Prof. Timothy Dwight of the Yale Theological Seminary. The members of the church have invited all former residents of this place who may be interested in the church to attend the celebration.

WHISKY FRAUDS SENTENCES.

ST. LOUIS, April 16.—The following sentences were passed yesterday: John S. Bittinger, ex-ganger at St. Joseph, two years in the penitentiary and $2,000 fine; Simon Adler and Abraham Furst, distillers and rectifiers at St. Joseph, each one year in the county jail and $10,000 fine; John Sheehan, distiller at St. Joseph, eight months in the county jail from September last and $1,000 fine; Henry R. W. Hartwig and Ernst F. Hartwig, brothers, at St. Joseph, each three months in the county jail and $2,500 fine; James E. Marsh, ex-ganger at Kansas City, six months in the county jail and $1,000 fine.

TELEGRAPHIC NOTES.

NEW-ORLEANS, La., April 16.—Five million eight hundred thousand dollars of bonds have been exchanged for premium bonds, being nearly one-fourth of the city debt.

BOSTON, April 16.—Negotiations for the sale of *The Boston Post* newspaper were concluded on Saturday. The purchasers have been connected with the paper for some time.

BOSTON, April 16.—A suit has been brought by the Hon. S. C. Maine of this city against Gen. B. F. Butler et al. for $200,000 for alleged violation of contracts, etc., relative to certain patents.

RONDOUT, N. Y., April 16.—About 400 men employed on the docks of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company struck yesterday. They had received $1 per day, and demand $1 50.

GLOUCESTER, Mass., April 16.—News from Fort Mulgrave, N. S., states that great anxiety is felt for the safety of the schooner Katie, which left that port on the 2d inst. for Boston with 65 passengers.

ST. LOUIS, April 16.—James B. Eads informs the South Pass Jetty Company here that the jetties show the least depth of water to be 15½ feet clear. A depth of 22 feet extends one mile and three-quarters.

THE PRESIDENCY.

JUDGE DAVIS AND THE DEMOCRATS.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR JUDGE DAVIS'S NOMINATION—A NON-PARTISAN CANDIDATE AND NO PLATFORM—GEN. HARRISON'S ELECTION BY A SIMILAR POLICY.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, April 15.—"Judge Davis is the man. Let the Democrats nominate him and put him on the Presidential track without a bridle, and I tell you he cannot be beaten." These were the words of an old politician of great experience and rare judgment, a man who owes allegiance to neither party, but who, like the majority of those who were Liberal Republicans in 1872, will vote for the best man nominated, all things considered. He is too good a Republican to train in any party of which Conkling or Morton is the standard-bearer, and too good a Democrat to countenance Bourbonism or tolerate inflation or repudiation. He is a fair representative of the Independent Voter, who neither desires nor expects any place of honor or trust under the Government, but who is determined to make his influence felt in the next election.

"I say he must not be bridled," he continued. "Platforms are humbugs any way, and the Democratic party cannot make one that will not weaken it. All that is necessary is to present Judge Davis to the people as the representative of purity and honesty in government, and then attack the Republicans on their shameful record. If the Democrats should do this, I don't care whom the Republicans nominate, he cannot be elected. Young men like you," he continued, "cannot remember the campaign of 1840. The administration of Martin Van Buren had been dishonest and extravagant as that of Grant has been, only it was not half as bad. Times were hard; business had not recovered from the terrible financial shock of 1837; the people were dissatisfied, discontented, and ready for a change. When Gen. Harrison was nominated at Harrisburg, in December, 1839, Reverdy Johnson simply moved that he be presented to the people for their support, and the Convention adjourned without adopting any other platform. You know what the result was. Some of the strongest Van Buren States turned right over and gave Harrison immense majorities. The people are now just ripe for another such revolution, and with proper management by the Democrats it will come. But it will not do for them to nominate any man who has been prominently identified with their party. If they do, the Republicans will force into the canvass the old issues of the war and place the Democrats on the defensive; then the Republicans will win, for the people are not ready to place the Government in the hands of the men who tried so hard to destroy it."

"But you think Judge Davis can command the confidence and support of the people in spite of his nomination by the Democratic party?" I remarked.

"Certainly," he replied, "and because I believe that his nomination without any platform or policy except the promise of honest administration would rally to his support the best men of both parties. He was one of President Lincoln's most trusted advisers; the Republicans cannot find a man whose Union record during the war was better. Judge Davis is also known to be a man of exalted ideas; he would call about him the very best men in the country—those whom people of all parties would recognize as such—and the reformation of the civil service would extend from the Cabinet down through all grades of Government officials. He is a man of great firmness and executive ability. People said in 1872 that while they had confidence in Mr. Greeley's honesty of purpose, he would be unable to stand up against the influences that would surround him if he was elected. They could not say that of Judge Davis. His election would break up the old party organizations, and that is a consummation devoutly to be wished."

"When you say that the Republicans cannot name a man who can be elected if Judge Davis is nominated at St. Louis and not hampered with a platform, do you not forget that Mr. Blaine is now ahead of all other candidates, and that, should he fail, Secretary Bristow has a legion of supporters who are by no means despondent?" I asked.

"No, I do not," he said. "You must remember that the great contest of the campaign is to be fought in Ohio and Indiana in October. Now neither Blaine nor Bristow could carry either of those States against Davis. Besides these, he would certainly carry every State now conceded to the Democrats, as well as Illinois and Wisconsin, while with the prestige gained in the West in October, he would enter the later contest in the East under very favorable circumstances. I think he would carry New-York (his opinions on the currency are as sound as those of any man the Republicans can name), Connecticut, and New-Jersey, and, perhaps, New-Hampshire and Pennsylvania. Indeed, I believe the revolution would be as sweeping as that which gave the Whigs their victory in 1840."

"I find that the Democratic leaders here in Washington are far from insensible to the advantages they would gain by the nomination of Judge Davis. They are committed to no candidate and are divided by no factions. Whatever we may think of their sagacity and wisdom in the management of affairs in the House, they are pursuing a policy in regard to the Presidential nomination which is an eminently strong one. If prejudices against any of the candidates exist, they find no expression. I believe they place the prospect of success above all personal considerations, and this makes me look very confidently for the nomination of Judge Davis at St. Louis. If he is a candidate I shall vote for him; if he is not, I shall probably vote for Mr. Blaine or Secretary Bristow, one of whom I assume will be the Republican nominee. I will not, under any probable circumstances, vote for either Morton or Conkling."

As a chip showing the direction of one current in the great ocean of Presidential gossip and intrigue, I repeat this conversation for what it is worth.

Z. L. W.

THE DANA CONTROVERSY.

A CRITICISM ON MR. LAWRENCE.

HAS MR. WM. B. LAWRENCE GIVEN HIMSELF THE TITLE OF UNITED STATES MINISTER TO LONDON?—WHAT THE FRENCH EDITION OF HIS WHEATON SHOWS—CHARGÉS D'AFFAIRES HAVE NO CLAIM TO THE RANK OR NAME OF MINISTER.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The attempt to defeat Mr. Dana's confirmation continues to elicit comment in England. The comment is all of one kind; well expressed by *The Daily News*, which calls it a "paltry intrigue." *The Standard* has a leading article in the same sense, and I may say, as a summary of the whole matter, that I know of no important or unimportant journal which does not applaud the nomination; of no public man who does not hope it will be confirmed. *The Saturday Review* of to-day remarks that Gen. Grant, in proposing a successor to Gen. Schenck, "has thought it essential to prefer an honest and cultivated candidate to a vulgar political adventurer." Of the "piracy" charge, the same journal says that both Butler and Lawrence are obviously actuated by personal hostility, and that Mr. Dana has wisely refused to defend himself against a trumped-up charge.

Now one word as to this Mr. W. B. Lawrence. I mentioned in a former letter that I believed he was in the habit of giving himself in Europe the title of former Minister of the United States in London. The evidence of it now lies under my hand. His very latest publication is, I believe, a Commentary on Wheaton in French: "Commentaire sur les Eléments der Droit International, etc., de Henry Wheaton;" Leipzig and Paris, 1868. On the title page of this book he describes himself as "William Beach Lawrence, Ancien Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique à Londres"—"formerly Minister of the United States of America in London." The Preface is dated Ochre Point, Newport, Rhode Island, Etats-Unis d'Amérique, le 1er Mars, 1868, and signed W. B. Lawrence. And the copy before me, bought this week of the publishers in Paris, Messrs. Durand & Lauriel, contains a printed slip denoting that the book was "Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1868, by William Beach Lawrence, in the Clerk's office of the District Court for the District of Rhode Island." In short, the evidence is conclusive that it is Mr. W. B. Lawrence himself who has assumed the title of Minister of the United States.

I give these details because I mean to leave no loophole for Mr. Lawrence's escape. At the same time, I am aware that he excuses, or did excuse, his assumption of the title of Minister on the ground that he had once been Chargé d'Affaires in London, and that Wheaton enumerates chargés d'affaires as one class of ministers. The passage alleged for this purpose may be found in Dana's Wheaton, Part III., Sections 211-215. But this excuse is too flimsy to bear a moment's examination. First, Wheaton's language is: "Public ministers are divided into the four following classes"—chargés d'affaires being the fourth. But Wheaton's paragraph is, in terms and avowedly, only a restatement of the rules adopted by the Congress of Vienna and that of Aix-la-Chapelle. And the language of the article of the Congress of Vienna is not that "public ministers" are divided into four classes, but "*diplomatic employés* are divided into three classes" (Wheaton makes four by distinguishing between ministers and ministers resident). The three classes of "diplomatic employés" are: 1. Ambassadors, legates, or nuncios; 2. Envoys, ministers, or others accredited to sovereigns; 3. Chargés d'affaires accredited to Ministers of Foreign Affairs. So that in the first document on which Wheaton rests his classification, there is no authority for a chargé d'affaires being included under the general descriptive word "Minister," by which Wheaton carelessly translates the accurate French phrase "employés diplomatiques." And in the second document, the protocol of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, they not only are not included, but as above are expressly discriminated. The language of the protocol is: "It is agreed between the five courts that the Ministers Resident accredited to them shall form with respect to their rank an intermediary class between the Ministers of the second order and the chargés d'affaires"—the latter being put by themselves.

Nor is it necessary to establish, as I have, that a chargé d'affaires has no technical claim in the language of diplomacy to call himself Minister. The point is, do they in fact so call themselves, or does anybody else call them so? The answer is, No. All over Europe the custom is uniform, the usage settled, the distinction plain. A chargé d'affaires is one thing, a Minister another. I have taken some pains to inquire about this, and I assert on high diplomatic authority—on the authority of those familiar with diplomatic life in Europe—that a chargé d'affaires neither has any right to style himself Minister, nor does he. And I am told further that even if a full chargé d'affaires had such a right, which all deny, Mr. W. B. Lawrence could not plead it because he never was anything more than chargé d'affaires *per interim*. He was, in fact, Secretary of Legation from 1826 to 1828, and was once or twice accidentally left in charge of the legation.

I affirm, then, with respect to Mr. W. B. Lawrence, that his use of the title of Minister, to which he had neither technically nor by usage any right whatever, was misleading, and intended to mislead. It was a dishonest use, and Mr. W. B. Lawrence used it only where he believed he was not likely to be detected and exposed. He put it on the cards he distributed in Europe. He put it on the title-page of books for circulation in Europe. But on the title-page of the Wheaton edited by him and published in the United States, he put not "formerly Minister" but "formerly Chargé d'Affaires of the United States, at London." I quote from the edition of 1855, Boston. To have usurped the higher title at home would have brought him nothing but detection and ridicule. And this is the impostor who goes surreptitiously before a Senate Committe, backed by a criminal lawyer, to bring a charge of dishonesty against Mr. Dana! I have wasted too much space on him, but it is worth while to put him in the pillory and leave him there. Yours, G. W. S.

London, March 25, 1876.

POLITICAL NEWS.

THE INDEPENDENT VOTE TO THE FRONT.

CALL FOR A CONFERENCE IN THIS CITY ON MAY 15.

From The N. Y. Evening Post, April 15.

It may be necessary to say, in respect to the following circular, that it was not at once given to the press, because it was addressed to individuals and not to the public, but inasmuch as the subject-matter has been mentioned it is proper that the full text of the document should now be printed.

NEW-YORK, April 6, 1876.

DEAR SIR: The widespread corruption in our public service which has disgraced the Republic in the eyes of the world, and threatens to poison the vitality of our institutions; the uncertainty of the public mind and of party counsels as to grave economical questions involving in a great measure the honor of the Government, the morality of our business life, and the general well-being of the people, and the danger that an inordinate party spirit may, through the organized action of a comparatively small number of men who live by politics, succeed in overriding the most patriotic impulses of the people, and in monopolizing political power for selfish ends—seem to render it most desirable that no effort should be spared to secure to the popular desire for genuine reform a decisive influence in the impending national election.

Mindful of the fact that this patriotic desire is honestly struggling for effective expression inside of existing political organizations, as it is also strong outside of them, and believing that by all proper means it should be encouraged and made to prevail, the undersigned invite you to meet them and others of like purpose, who have been invited in the same manner, in a free conference to consider what may be done to prevent the National election of the Centennial year from becoming a mere choice of evils, and to secure the election of men to the highest offices of the Republic whose character and ability will satisfy the exigencies of our present situation and protect the honor of the American name. The conference will be held in the City of New-York on the 15th of May. You are respectfully and urgently requested to be present, and to communicate your acceptance of this invitation to H. C. Lodge, esq., Post-Office box 1,938, New-York City.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, New-York.
THEODORE D. WOOLSEY, Connecticut.
ALEX'R H. BULLOCK, Massachusetts.
HORACE WHITE, Illinois.
CARL SCHURZ, Missouri.

MR. BLAINE'S STANDING IN VIRGINIA.

WASHINGTON, April 16.—The Hon. W. H. H. Stowell, who received the highest vote for delegate-at-large to the Cincinnati Convention, and the Hon. J. B. Sener, the permanent President of the Lynchburg Republican Convention, arrived here to-day, say there was perfect harmony in the Convention after the permanent organization. The resolution of preference for Blaine was adopted by a Yea and Nay vote of 95 to 13, and is as follows:

Having implicit confidence in the personal worth, honor, and integrity, and in the political soundness and sagacity of the Hon. James G. Blaine of the State of Maine, and believing that he will uphold the Constitution of the United States as it is and make this nation loved at home and respected abroad, we hereby declare our preference for him as the nominee of the National Republican Convention for President of the United States.

The delegation stands 18 for Blaine and 4 divided between Conkling and Morton.

TAMMANY SOCIETY'S ANNUAL ELECTION.

A session of the Executive Committee of the Tammany General Committee was held on Saturday, at Tammany Hall. The election of 13 Sachems in the Tammany Society, which will take place this evening, was informally discussed. It is believed that the present officers will be reëlected, with the exception of William Walsh, County Clerk, whose friendship for John Morrissey and the Anti-Tammany Democracy will prejudice, it is thought, his chances of again securing the office. There is a strong desire to leave the office of Grand Sachem in the hands of Augustus Schell, but it is considered very doubtful whether the rules of the Society will permit his election as Grand Sachem for two terms in succession.

HOW MR. BLAINE WAS PUT ON HIS GUARD.

CHICAGO, April 16.—The Hon. Joseph Medill states that it is true that a month ago he was invited to Cincinnati to read some statements quietly circulating among Democrats as to Mr. Blaine's connection with Pacific Railroad bonds. It was said that these statements were to be exploded publicly about the time of the Cincinnati Convention. It was agreed that it would wrong Mr. Blaine to keep the matter from him, and Mr. Richard Smith apprised him of the story by letter a month ago. If Mr. Blaine made any reply Medill has not heard of it.

GENERAL FOREIGN NEWS.

THE WAR IN HERZEGOVINA.

VIENNA, Saturday, April 15, 1876.

Advices from Trebigne state that the Herzegovinian insurgents are seriously threatening that place, which is temporarily without Turkish troops, the latter having been withdrawn for the purpose of operating against the rebels in the Banjanis territory. Several engagements have been fought around Trebigne, and a number of places have been fired.

VIENNA, Saturday, April 15, 1876.

Prince Milan, with a general of his staff, will proceed to Zupriga on the 24th inst., where the headquarters will be established for the present.

RUSSIA DISPOSED TO BE PEACEFUL.

ST. PETERSBURG, April 16, 1876.

The *Journal de St. Petersburg* reproduces the pacific assurances which appeared in the Vienna *Political Correspondence* of April 13, to the effect that there had not been the slightest difference between Russia and Austria, and both powers would continue to act conjointly for the Pacification of Turkey. The *Journal* entreats the public to give no credit to the alarming reports which were in circulation last week.

RAGUSA, April 16, 1876.

The insurgents have withdrawn from the vicinity of Trebigne, which they were menacing.

THE ABYSSINIAN WAR.

THE EGYPTIAN ARMY SURROUNDED.

LONDON, Monday, April 17, 1876.

A special dispatch to *The Standard*, dated Alexandria, Saturday, says reports have been received there that the Egyptian army has been surrounded by the Abyssinians, and its situation is critical, and that Abyssinia demands an indemnity for the expenses of the war.

FRENCH AFFAIRS.

PARIS, Saturday, April 15, 1876.

The elections to fill the vacant seats in the Assembly, caused by the recent invalidations, have been fixed for the 21st of May.

The manager and editor of the *Evenement* have been fined and condemned to a month's imprisonment for the publication in that paper of an article concerning the Commune.

Prince Jerome Napoleon announces himself as a candidate for the seat in the French Assembly from Ajaccio, made vacant by M. Rouher's election from that place having been annulled.

PARIS, April 16, 1876.

Elections were held to-day to fill vacancies in the Chamber of Deputies, caused by the return of a member from more than one district. At Marseilles M. Bouquet, Radical, was elected by 4,214 votes. M. Garnier Pages, of the Left, received 1,938. At Lille, M. Mazure, Radical, was elected, receiving 6,600 votes, against 2,300 for M. Du Tilleul of the Left, and 2,100 for M. Vrau, Clericalist. Second ballots are necessary in Bordeaux and the Seventeenth Arrondissement of Paris. In the latter M. Pascal Duprat heads the poll.

Victor Hugo and Louis Blanc addressed a large audience here to-day. Half the proceeds of the meeting are devoted to the fund for sending the delegation of workmen to the Philadelphia Exhibition, and the remainder to the relief of relatives of Communist convicts. The speakers extolled the people of the United States for their industry and activity, and for the example they gave of love of liberty. They set forth the advantages which would result from the proposed visit of the French workmen to the American Exhibition, and dwelt particularly on the progress of industry as a means of cementing the bonds of friendship between France and the United States.

An official decree has been issued, announcing that a Universal Exhibition of Fine Arts will be held in 1878, simultaneously with the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition already announced.

BRITISH TRADE AND FINANCE.

LONDON, Saturday, April 15, 1876.

The Mincing Lane markets have been depressed this week and the demand restricted to current necessities. A full supply of coffee has been brought forward, but the auction sales were chiefly of East Indies, which brought nearly last week's prices. All low qualities continue dull. Tea was dull. Indian was somewhat lower. For sugar there has been some increase of the demand by refiners at firmer prices. Burmah rice, new crop, to arrive, sold at easier rates. Spices were inactive. Owing to the holidays the transactions to-day have been unimportant, and prices are nominally unaltered.

On the Stock Exchange there has been much excitement in the foreign stock market during the week, principally owing to the unsettled state of affairs in Eastern Europe, while the panic has been hightened by unfounded rumors relative to the non-payment of the Egyptian coupons due this month. American Government bonds have been steady. The supply of money continues large, and discount rates in the open market remain fully one per cent below the bank rates.

FOREIGN NOTES.

LONDON, April 15.—The colliers on strike in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire now number nearly 30,000.

ATHENS, April 15.—A Russian corvette, while entering the Piræus to-day, foundered, and all on board were drowned.

SINGAPORE, April 15.—Governor Sir William Jervois has returned to this place from Perak. All is quiet in Malacca, and no further disturbances are apprehended.

LONDON, April 15.—The weather to-day is fair but still cold. The recent snow-storm was the heaviest of the Winter, and in some parts of the country the heaviest for many years.

OTTAWA, Canada, April 16.—The country on both sides of the Rideau River, between this city and Hosback, is inundated. The St. Lawrence and Ottawa railroad track has been torn up by the freshet in many places near here, and trains are unable to pass over it. In Jonesville and New-Edinburgh some inhabitants have been compelled to leave their houses. The Montreal road is impassible, there being five feet of water on it in places.

STEINBERGER AND SAMOA.

As something has recently been said about Col. Steinberger in connection with Samoa Islands, it may be interesting to recall the fact that in March, 1873, Col. Steinberger was appointed a Special Agent of this Government to visit and report upon those islands. He grew in favor among the natives, and it appears that a petition, signed by a large majority of chiefs and rulers, was asked to receive his favorable consideration. It prayed for the protection of the United States. The following is among several documents on the subject, it being addressed to the President of the United States:

HOUSE OF MALICTOA, MOATOA, Oct. 4, 1873.

CHIEF: This is my letter of love to you, the chief who rules America. I am very much pleased with regard to the union between our Governments. My desire is that good arise for this land. Now this is my opinion and my wish; be pleased to appoint for us the chief, Col. Steinberger. It is very proper for that chief to come here to make things straight in this land. This is all my letter. May God grant you health and strength. MALIETOA, ZANPEPA.

No other communication than that communicated to the two Houses of Congress on the subject of Samoa two years ago have been transmitted to Congress.

CHICAGO'S PROTEST EFFECTUAL.

CHICAGO, April 15.—The Common Council held a long meeting to-day, which closed at a late hour to-night, and after much discussion of the subject declared the recent town election null and void, on account of frauds perpetrated, and, by virtue of the power vested in them, appointed the town officers. This ends all of the trouble, so far as these officers are concerned. The Mayor has, as yet, made no response to the written demand made by the Citizens' Committee for his resignation.

CRIMES AND CASUALTIES—BY TELEGRAPH.

BOSTON, April 16.—John Johnson hanged himself Friday night at the Tombs.

PORT JERVIS, N. Y., April 16.—The streams in this section are very high, the Neversink having overflowed its banks.

PORT STANLEY, April 16.—The steam barge Herald of Montreal was abandoned in a leaky condition off this port Sunday afternoon.

WORCESTER, Mass., April 16.—Holmes's boot shop in Westborough was burned yesterday morning. The loss is from $50,000 to $60,000.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 16.—The body of Wm. A. Hardings, a prominent citizen of Gadsden, Tenn., was found near that place on Thursday last in a ravine.

CORNING, N. Y., April 16.—The Sheriff of Steuben County has offered a reward of $200 for the arrest of John E. McNamara, who shot and killed Ellen M. Callinan at the Arcade Hotel on Saturday.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., April 16.—The schooner Ann Eliza, Capt. Cousins, from New-York for Folly Landing, sprung aleak off Point Judith, and was run ashore on Gravelly Point with four feet of water in her hold.